

List of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of interpreting a pronoun ~~reference, the~~ ~~method comprising the steps of:~~

- A) recognizing a user input as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;
- B) ~~associating a historical listing of noun references with an associated pronoun preference;~~
- ~~C~~B) comparing said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to ~~at least one of said associated pronoun information~~ ~~associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information; preferences; and~~
- ~~D~~C) selecting one of said historical noun references ~~of said historical listing as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and at least one of said associated pronoun information preferences; and~~
- D) updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein in ~~step BC~~, the ~~selecting of one of said historical noun references associated pronoun preference is~~ determined as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to each of the noun references.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said historical usage includes maintaining a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein in ~~step DC~~), said historical noun references ~~is-are~~ selected based upon a match of said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ with at least one of said associated pronoun preferences.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein in ~~step CB~~), said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ is compared to at least one of said associated historical noun references ~~pronoun preferences~~ in order from most recent to least recent in said historical listing.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~ comprising:

a recognizer adapted ~~for-to~~ recognizing a user input as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;

a historical listing of noun references ~~with an-and~~ associated pronoun information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information~~preference~~;

means for comparing a said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to ~~at least one of~~ said associated pronoun information; preferences; and

means for selecting one of said noun references of said historical listing as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and ~~at least one of~~ said associated pronoun information~~preferences~~; and

means for updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of one of said noun references.

7. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 6 further comprising means for determining an associated pronoun preference as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to the noun reference.

8. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said historical listing includes a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said noun reference is selected based upon a match of said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ with ~~at least one of said~~ associated pronoun preferencesinformation.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said means for comparing is configured to compare each recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to said pronoun information associated with said historical noun references ~~is compared to at least one of said associated pronoun preferences in~~ chronological order from most recent historical noun reference to least recent historical noun~~s~~ of the noun's references in said historical listing.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~ in a voice user interface comprising ~~the steps of~~:

- A) recognizing a user utterance as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;
- ~~B) associating a historical listing of at least one noun reference with an associated pronoun preference;~~
- ~~C) comparing said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to at least one of said associated pronoun information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information; preferences; and~~
- ~~D) selecting a record from a database corresponding to one of said historical noun references of said historical listing as a function of said comparison between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and said at least one of said associated pronoun information; and preferences.~~
- D) updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said record.

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 wherein ~~in step~~ ~~BD), the record is associated selected pronoun preference is determined~~ as a function of historical usage of a pronoun with respect to each of the noun references.

13 (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 12 wherein said historical usage includes ~~maintaining~~ a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given noun reference.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 wherein ~~step CB~~ includes comparing said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to said at least one of said associated pronoun information preferences in chronological order from most recent to least recent.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 further comprising ~~the step of:~~

E) placing a telephone call to a telephone number in said selected record of said database.

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 further comprising ~~the step of:~~

~~E~~F) sending an electronic message to an address in said selected record of said database.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for interpreting a pronoun ~~reference~~ in a voice user interface comprising:

a recognizer adapted ~~for to~~ recognizing a user input as containing a recognized pronoun ~~reference~~;

a historical listing of ~~at least one~~ noun references with an and associated pronoun information associating the historical noun references with pronoun number and gender information preference;

means for comparing ~~a~~said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ to at least one of ~~said~~
~~associated~~ pronoun information; preferences; and

means for selecting a record from a database corresponding to one of ~~said~~
historical noun references of ~~said historical~~ listing as a function of said comparison
between said recognized pronoun ~~reference~~ and at least one of ~~said~~ ~~associated~~ pronoun
informationpreferences; and

means for updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful
selection of said historical noun reference.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 17 further
comprising:

means for determining an associated pronoun preference as a function of
historical usage of a pronoun with respect to ~~the~~said noun reference.

19. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 18 wherein said historical
usage includes a count of correct usage events of a given pronoun with respect to a given
noun reference.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 17 wherein said
means for comparing is configured to compare each recognized pronoun reference to said
pronoun information associated with said historical noun references is compared to at
least one of said associated pronoun preferences in chronological order from most recent
historical noun reference to least recent historical noun reference.

21. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 17 further comprising:
means for placing a telephone call to a telephone number in said selected record
of said database.

22. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 17 further comprising:
means for sending an electronic message to an address in said selected record of said
database.

23. (Currently Amended) A method of establishing a pronoun preference
information related to a noun identifier in a voice user interface database including a user,
the method comprising: the steps of:

A) establishing providing a at least one pronoun preference information
database field associated with a pronoun and in a pronoun database corresponding to a
reference noun identifier in a reference database;

B) searching for historical information indicative of a use of said pronoun
related to said reference noun identifier preference; and

C) assigning said pronoun preference information field a value designation
indicative of a first pronoun designation as a function of a response by the user.

24. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein step-B)
includes searching a database record corresponding to said reference noun identifier in
said reference database.

25. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step-B~~) includes searching a plurality of database records, ~~in said reference database~~, having a same or similar noun identifier as said reference noun identifier, for pronoun information ~~indicative of a pronoun preference~~.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step-A~~) includes ~~establishing providing~~ a masculine pronoun preference-information field and a feminine pronoun preference-information field.

28. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 27 wherein said masculine pronoun preference-information field is “him” and said feminine pronoun preference-information field is “her.”

29. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 23 wherein ~~step-A~~) includes ~~establishing providing~~ a singular pronoun preference-information field and a plural pronoun information~~preference~~ field.

30. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 29 wherein said singular pronoun preference-information field is “it” and said plural pronoun preference-information field is “them.”

31. (Currently Amended) A system for establishing a pronoun preference for ~~to~~ a noun identifier in a database including a pronoun preference field, the system in a ~~in~~ database comprising:

a pronoun preference-information database including at least one pronoun information preference-field corresponding to a reference noun identifier in ~~a reference~~ said database;

means for searching said pronoun information database for historical information including number and gender information associated with the noun identifier, the historical information being indicative of a pronoun preference, the means for searching returns a pronoun preference result as a function of said search of said pronoun information database; and

means for assigning said pronoun preference field a designation indicative of a first pronoun designation-value indicative of said pronoun preference result.

32. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 further comprising means for searching a record corresponding to said reference noun identifier in said ~~reference~~ database.

33. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 further comprising means for searching a plurality of records, in said ~~reference~~ database, having a same or similar noun identifier as said reference noun identifier for pronoun information indicative of a pronoun preference.

34. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 further comprising means for searching a plurality of records, in a default pronoun designation database, having a same or similar noun identifier as said reference noun identifier for pronoun information ~~indicative of a pronoun preference~~.

35. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 wherein said pronoun preference-information database includes a masculine pronoun preference information field and a feminine pronoun preference-information field.

36. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 wherein said masculine pronoun preference-information field is "him" and said feminine pronoun preference-information field is "her."

37. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 31 wherein said pronoun reference database includes a singular pronoun preference-information field and a plural pronoun preference-information field.

38. (Currently amended) A system according to claim 31 wherein said singular pronoun preference-information field is "it" and said plural pronoun preference information field is "them."

39. (Currently Amended) A system providing for user interaction comprising:

a voice personal assistant adapted to presenting prompts to and receiving responses from a user;

said voice personal assistant including a recognizer adapted for recognizing responses that include pronouns, received from the user;

means for maintaining a historical list of noun references;

~~means for associating at least one associated pronoun preference with at least one noun reference in said historical list;~~

means for comparing a recognized pronoun to with ~~at least one of said associated pronoun information associated with historical noun references, the pronoun information including pronoun number and gender information;~~

an application adapted for performing at least one function for said user;

means for selecting one of said historical noun references ~~of said historical listing~~ as a function of a comparison between a recognized pronoun with ~~at least one of said associated pronoun information preferences; and~~

utilizing a selected one of said noun references in performing a function of said application; and

means for updating said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.

40. (Currently Amended) A system providing for user interaction comprising:
a voice personal assistant adapted to presenting prompts to and receiving responses from a user;

said voice personal assistant including a recognizer adapted for recognizing responses that include pronouns, received from the user;

 a historical list of noun references;

 a pronoun cross-reference associating ~~at least one associated~~ pronoun information~~preference~~ with at least one noun reference in said historical list the pronoun information including pronoun number and gender information;

 a first subsystem adapted for selecting one of said noun references of said historical listing as a function of a comparison between a recognized pronoun with ~~at least one of said~~ associated pronoun information preferences in said pronoun cross-reference;

 an application adapted for performing at least one function for said user; ~~and~~ utilizing a selected one of said noun references in performing a function of said application; ~~and~~

a second subsystem configured to update said pronoun information as a function of a successful selection of said historical noun reference.

41. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the response is a user utterance.